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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

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Please see the Secretary's  
pencil'd comment at the  
right.

Coby Swank  
11/30/62

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→ Mr. Hall      OK +

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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November 29, 1962

MEMORANDUM TO: The Secretary

THROUGH:

S/S *WKS*

FROM:

P - Robert Manning *RJM*

There is a relatively simple and useful way to approach one of the principal problems discussed at this morning's EXCOM meeting with the President. The concern over continued reports, rumors and speculation about continued presence of soviets offensive weapons in Cuba will probably for some time elude full control, but the following steps would be of great value in easing the problem and perhaps even solve it.

1. Release to the press either directly or on background (probably the latter) a full version of Mr. McConel's oral presentation this morning of intelligence facts and assessments. There is nothing in it that is startling, nothing whose revelation would jeopardize intelligence sources. Some care would have to be taken in the emphasis placed on the negative character of much of the assessment -- that is, the point that we cannot absolutely prove that offensive missiles are not being secreted in Cuba. Otherwise the facts and assessments he presented today ought to be conveyed to the public. On its own, this report would not be sufficiently reassuring, but its value as reassurance could be briefly enhanced by combining release of this information with step (2).

2. Provide for the press a detailed description of the system being used to check out refugee reports, to include pre-checking by newsmen of supposedly valid reports and to screen such information from refugees and others for their possible contribution to the intelligence picture. This should be done in a context which emphasizes the seriousness of unchecked speculation in terms of their effect on public morale, on credibility of the Government and on future negotiations. By so doing, we could probably develop a willingness of many of the would-be purveyors of such information to check it out with the Government first.

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3. A third step that would be helpful although it may not be altogether necessary, would be occasionally to publish reconnaissance photographs to support the assessment referred to in point one. This would have the additional virtue of demonstrating that close surveillance continues and that any report with a shred of validity is being alertly followed up and examined by United States surveillance.

It is difficult to see any serious flaw in such a way of handling this particular problem. The sooner it is discussed, the more quickly we can begin to bring the situation under reasonable control.

Recommendation:

That you present roughly this proposition to the EXCOM and urge early and concerted action to carry it out.

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P:RJManning:eni